

REMARKS

In the final Office Action¹, the Examiner:

rejected claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph;

rejected claims 1, 4, 9, 12, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over a translation of JP 2000-187631 to Sakamaki ("*Sakamaki*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,898,636 to Adams et al. ("*Adams*");

rejected claims 2, 3, 10, 11, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sakamaki* and *Adams* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,519,571 to Guheen et al. ("*Guheen*");

rejected claims 6, 14, 19, 21, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sakamaki* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,630,944 to Kakuta ("*Kakuta*") and U.S. Patent No. 6,493,673 to Smith et al. ("*Smith*"); and

objected to claims 8, 16, 22, 23, 25, and 26 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but indicated these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants have amended claims 22 and 25, and canceled claims 1-4, 6, 9-12, 14, 17-19, 21, and 24 without prejudice or disclaimer. Upon entry of this Amendment After Final, claims 8, 16, 22, 23, 25, and 26 will be pending.

In light of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's timely reconsideration and allowance of the currently pending claims.

I. The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 103(a)

The rejected claims have been canceled, rendering these rejections moot.

¹ The Office Action contains statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the final Office Action.

II. The Objection to Claims 8, 16, 22, 23, 25, and 26

The Examiner indicated that claims 8, 16, 22, 23, 25, and 26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims (final Office Action at page 2). Claims 22 and 25 are rewritten to include the subject matter of their respective base claims and any intervening claims, and are therefore allowable. Claims 8 and 23 depend from claim 22, and claims 16 and 26 depend from claim 25, and are allowable at least due to their dependence from allowable base claims.

III. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 8, 16, 22, 23, 25, and 26 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Applicants respectfully point out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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